

An Archaeological  
Monitoring and  
Recording Brief at Castor  
Church of England  
Primary School  
Castor Peterborough



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



October 2010

**Client: Peterborough City Council**

OA East Report No: 1201

OASIS No: oxfordar3-83821

NGR: TL12486 98453



**An Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Brief at  
Castor Church of England Primary School, Castor, Peterborough**

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*With contributions by Nina Crummy*

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*Report Date: October 2010*

**Report Number:** 1201  
**Site Name:** Castor Primary School  
**HER Event No:** N/A  
**Date of Works:** August 2010  
**Client Name:** Peterborough City Council  
**Client Ref:**  
**Planning Ref:**  
**Grid Ref:** TL12486 98453  
**Site Code:** CASSOC10  
**Finance Code:** CASSOC10  
**Receiving Body:**  
**Accession No:**

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## **Summary**

*.An archaeological Monitoring and Recording Brief was conducted at Castor Church of England Primary School, Castor. The wall on the north side of the school was removed under archaeological supervision. Fragmentary evidence of the Roman occupation of the site was uncovered but no significant structures were revealed.*





## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological Monitoring and Recording Brief was conducted at Castor Church of England Primary School, Castor.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological monitoring and recording brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Rebecca Casa Hatton of Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service, supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Castor village sits on the interface of clay-capped limestone 'uplands' which forms the northern boundary of the Nene valley, and the terrace river gravels of the valley. The church occupies a prominent position at c. 17m OD near the top of the limestone slope, whilst the southern end of the school playing field, some 100m south of the church, lies at only 9m OD. River terrace gravels extend into this central portion of the village.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site lies within the boundaries of Scheduled Monument PE93, which covers a complex of high status buildings in the Roman town of Castor.
- 1.3.2 E.T. Artis first drew attention to the complex of high status Roman-British buildings within Castor village. A series of excellent illustrations published in his *Durobrivae of Antoninus* (1828) depict the on-going excavation of substantial masonry buildings in the vicinity of the church and within the school grounds.
- 1.3.3 A plan of the buildings which he located in this area suggested a complex based on an open courtyard; east and west wings projecting down slope to the southwest. Subsequent investigation has provided further evidence for this interpretation, and has led to the suggestion that the site constitutes a single great 'palatial' complex; the seat of some (as yet) unidentified Roman dignitary (Mackreth 1984). The monumental aspect of the complex is apparent in the scale of the building foundations, their prominent location, and evidence for the methodical terracing of the hillside.
- 1.3.4 Castor has been associated with St Kyneburgha's seventh century nunnery. Excavation at Elmlea, immediately to the north of the churchyard, has produced Middle Saxon material consistent with monastic occupation. Further Middle Saxon remains have been encountered to the south of the church near the school (Dallas 1973).
- 1.3.5 Recent evaluation in advance of the construction of the Benefice Centre produced evidence of early Saxon occupation and the robbing of Roman masonry during the Middle Saxon period (Lucas 1998). St Kyneburgha's is a very fine 12th century church. Exceptionally, its consecration in 1124 is recorded by a dedication inscription above the

south door of the chancel. Fragments of decorated stone and cross indicate a preconquest ecclesiastical presence on the site. Castor parish included the hamlets of Ailsworth, Milton, Upton and Sutton. The central role of St Kyneburgha's, its antiquity and splendour, further suggest the early significance of the site.

- 1.3.6 Immediately north of the school field, excavation during the 1950s in advance of a cemetery extension revealed substantial well preserved Romano-British building remains, and early-middle Saxon activity (Green, et al 1988).
- 1.3.7 A small excavation in advance of the construction of an office at the school revealed more building remains and a Roman period grave (Meadows 1991).

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The work was commissioned by Peterborough City Council. The ground works were conducted by John F Dunkling Ltd

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this Recording Brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that all archaeological features exposed during ground works be recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard in accordance with IFA guidelines. Furthermore any significant artefacts would be recorded and analysed to an acceptable standard in accordance with IFA guidelines.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360 mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 After the removal of the modern wall and the associated modern disturbance by machine the exposed section was cleaned by hand prior to recording.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. The exposed sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 The investigation was conducted in predominantly bright and dry weather conditions.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The excavation of the modern wall revealed a soil profile that was up to 1m deep and extended westwards from the road, Stock's Hill, for 50m and ended less than 10m along the boundary of the cemetery lying to the south of St Kyneburgha's Church.

#### 3.2 Modern Disturbance

3.2.1 The excavated section revealed modern disturbance along the length of the wall. Deposited behind the breeze blocks that constituted the original construction was a large quantity of rough hewn stone packing material (110). This layer was 0.64m deep and extended downwards from the base of the topsoil to the bottom of the foundations of the wall. It was approximately 0.30m thick. This material was in all likelihood lain down in order to facilitate drainage behind the wall and prevent expansion of the soil when wet that would have undermined the structure.

3.2.2 Once this packing material was removed it was possible to observe the soil profile. Immediately underlying the topsoil deposit was a layer of mid grey yellow sand that was observed in two distinct deposits (101 & 108). This was interpreted as a levelling layer.

3.2.3 Layers 101 and 108 overlay a subsoil deposit (102) that was fairly mixed with modern inclusions including brick, scrap metal and plastic. Immediately underlying 102 were two very similar deposits (103 & 104) comprising a mid grey brown clay silt. Layer 103 was differentiated by a high frequency of large chalk inclusions. It is suggested that these layers were deposited subsequent to the construction of the wall when the ground behind the wall was reinstated.

3.2.4 Approximately half way along the section the level of the natural dipped away markedly and this was interpreted as evidence that the modern disturbance had led to a truncation of the natural deposits. At this point an undulating layer comprised of mixed natural and soil deposits was recorded (109) that extended beyond the base of the foundation trench. A number of pieces of residual Roman pottery including a piece of stamped samian (App. B.2) were recovered from this layer along with modern material including fragments of breeze block and modern metal.

#### 3.3 Ditch 107

3.3.1 A single archaeological feature was recorded in the exposed profile. Lying 17m from the eastern limit of the section was a ditch (**107**) cut from the level of the natural (105). The ditch was 1.35m in width by 0.55m deep. Its base was visible in the foundation trench, which showed it to be aligned southeast to northwest. A piece of worked bone (App. B.1) was recovered from the single fill of the feature (106) a dark grey brown clay silt.

#### 3.4 Finds Summary

3.4.1 A small assemblage of pottery was recovered during the recording brief. This material was residual. A single fragment of worked bone was recovered from the fill of ditch **107**.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 The recording and monitoring brief at Castor Church of England Lower School revealed that the area under investigation had undergone significant disturbance, the majority of which is certainly attributable to the construction of the site boundary wall. As a result of The terracing that took place at the time of the construction of the school resulted in the western half of the exposed section being truncated to below the level of the natural deposits which suggests that any archaeological evidence extending into the development area have been lost.

4.1.2 In the eastern part of the section ditch **107** was recorded on a south east to north west alignment. This feature was only 0.55m deep and it is suggested that it would not survive within the grounds of the school as the level of truncation due to terracing during the construction of the school would have destroyed it.

### 4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by Peterborough Museum.

## APPENDIX A. CONTEXT INVENTORY

Soil Profile						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Profile extended for westwards for 50m from the modern Road, Stocks Hill					Width (m)	50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.22	Levelling Layer	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Subsoil	-	-
103	Layer			Make up		
104	Layer			Make up		
105	Layer			Natural		
106	Fill			Ditch fill	SF1 bone comb fragment	Late Saxon
107	Cut			Ditch Cut		
108	Layer			Levelling Layer		
109	Layer			Make up		
110	Layer			Packing		

## APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

### B.1 The antler comb fragment

*By Nina Crummy*

#### ***Identification and dating***

- B.1.1 This small fragment (SF 1, context [106]) from one of the connecting-plates of a composite double-sided antler comb has broken at each end across a rivet hole; length 32 mm, width 12 mm.
- B.1.2 The section is plano-convex, with slightly undercut edges. The surface is decorated by three groups of three transverse grooves, and the edges are scarred by notches from the cutting of the teeth, which was done once the various elements of the comb had been fixed together. The spacing of the teeth is the same on each side, seven notches to the centimetre.
- B.1.3 The narrow width of this fragment, together with its undercut low plano-convex section, rudimentary decoration and undifferentiated teeth, place it firmly within the Late Saxon period. Several similar combs and connecting-plate fragments come from mid 9th to late 10th century contexts at Anglo-Scandinavian York (MacGregor *et al.* 1999, 1932-4).

#### ***Reference***

- MacGregor, A., 1999 *Bone, antler, ivory and horn from Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval York*, Archaeology of York 17/12 (York)
- Mainman, A. J. and Rogers, N. S. H.,

## B.2 Stamped Samian

*By Stephen Wadson*

### **Identification and dating**

- B.2.1 Recovered from layer **109** was the remains of SF 2, a Central Gaulish Drag. 33 Samian cup (Webster 1996, 45). Consisting of a complete base and foot ring, the vessel can be closely dated due to the presence of a makers stamp on the interior of the base.
- B.2.2 Reading “MALLEDV.F” (Malledus fecit) the stamp, produced using die 4b (Hartley & Dickinson 2009, Vol 5, 225) can be attributed to the workshop of Malledus (AD155-190).
- B.2.3 Produced at Lezoux (Tomber and Dore 1998, 32) the vessel is typical of the mid to late Antonine period, the remains are the only evidence of continental imports recovered from the assemblage.

### **References**

- Tomber, R and Dore, J., 1998 The National Roman Fabric reference collection, A Handbook. MoLAS Monograph 2.
- Hartley, B., R., Dickinson, B.,M., 2009 Names on Terra Sigillata, An index of makers' stamps and signature on Gallo-Roman Terra Sigillata (Samian ware), Volume 5, Institute of Classical studies, University of London.
- Webster, G., 1996 Roman Samian Pottery in Britain. Practical handbook in Archaeology 13, Council for British Archaeology.



## APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Drummond-Murray. J 2010 Specification for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Castor Primary School, Castor, Peterborough

## APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	<input type="text" value="oxfordar3-83821"/>		
Project Name	<input type="text" value="Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Brief at Casdtor Primary School"/>		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	<input type="text" value="02-08-2010"/>	Finish	<input type="text" value="04-08-2010"/>
Previous Work (by OA East)	<input type="text" value="No"/>	Future Work	<input type="text" value="No"/>

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	<input type="text" value="CASSOC10"/>	Planning App. No.	<input type="text"/>
HER No.	<input type="text"/>	Related HER/OASIS No.	<input type="text"/>

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	<input type="text" value="Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16"/>
Development Type	<input type="text" value="Public Building"/>

### Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>

### Project Location

County	<input type="text" value="Peterborough"/>	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	<input type="text" value="Castor"/>	<input type="text" value="Stocks Hill,&lt;br/&gt;Castor,&lt;br/&gt;Peterborough&lt;br/&gt;PE5 7AY"/>
Parish	<input type="text" value="Castor"/>	
HER	<input type="text"/>	
Study Area	<input type="text"/>	National Grid Reference <input type="text" value="TL 12486 98453"/>

## Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	James Drummond Murray
Project Design Originator	James Drummond Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond Murray
Supervisor	Chris Thatcher

## Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Local Stores	Local Stores	Local Stores
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

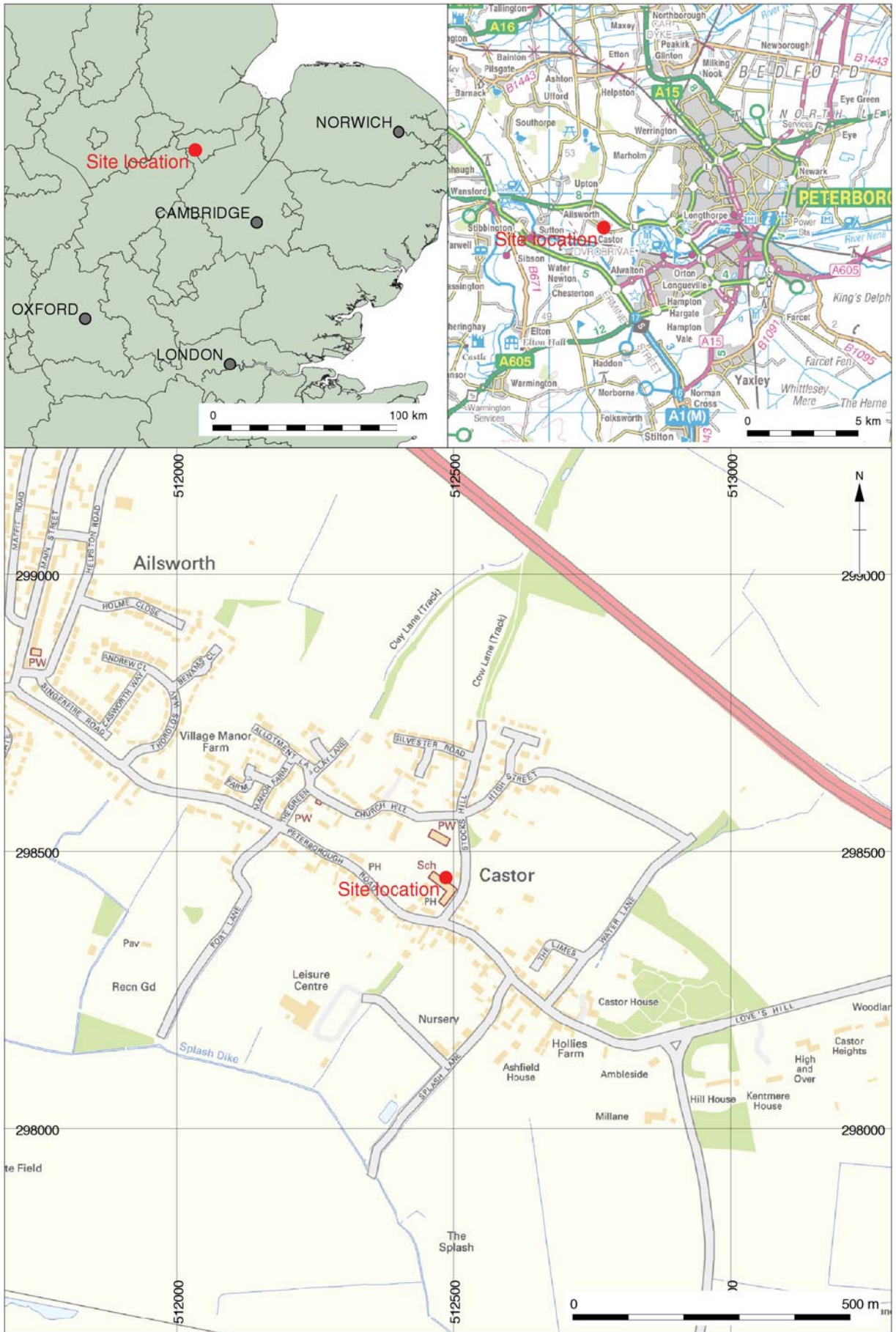
## Archive Contents/Media

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Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Bone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

### Notes:





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Figure 1: Site location



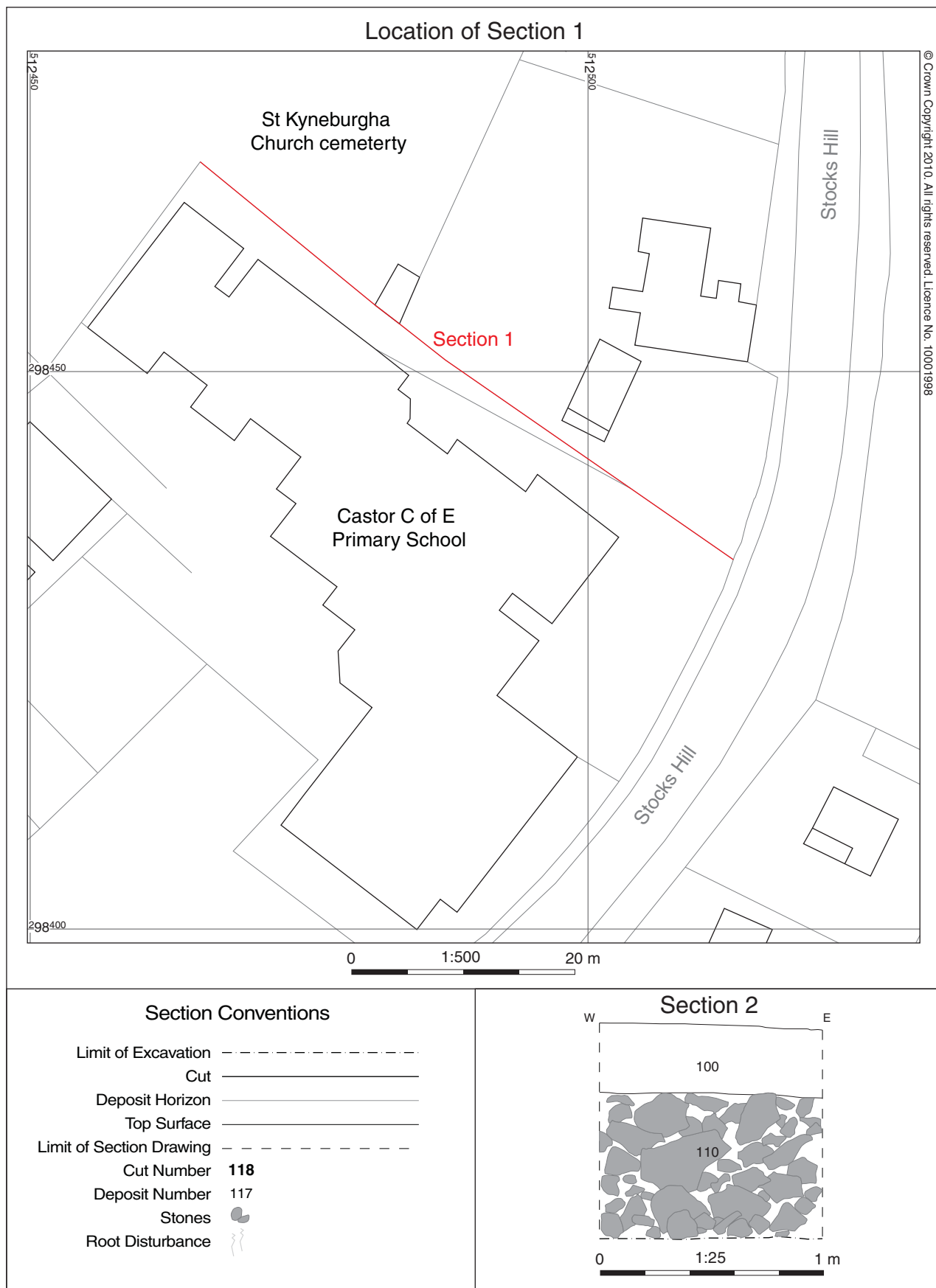


Figure 2: Location of the works at the school and Section 2 (position of Section 2 shown on Section 1)





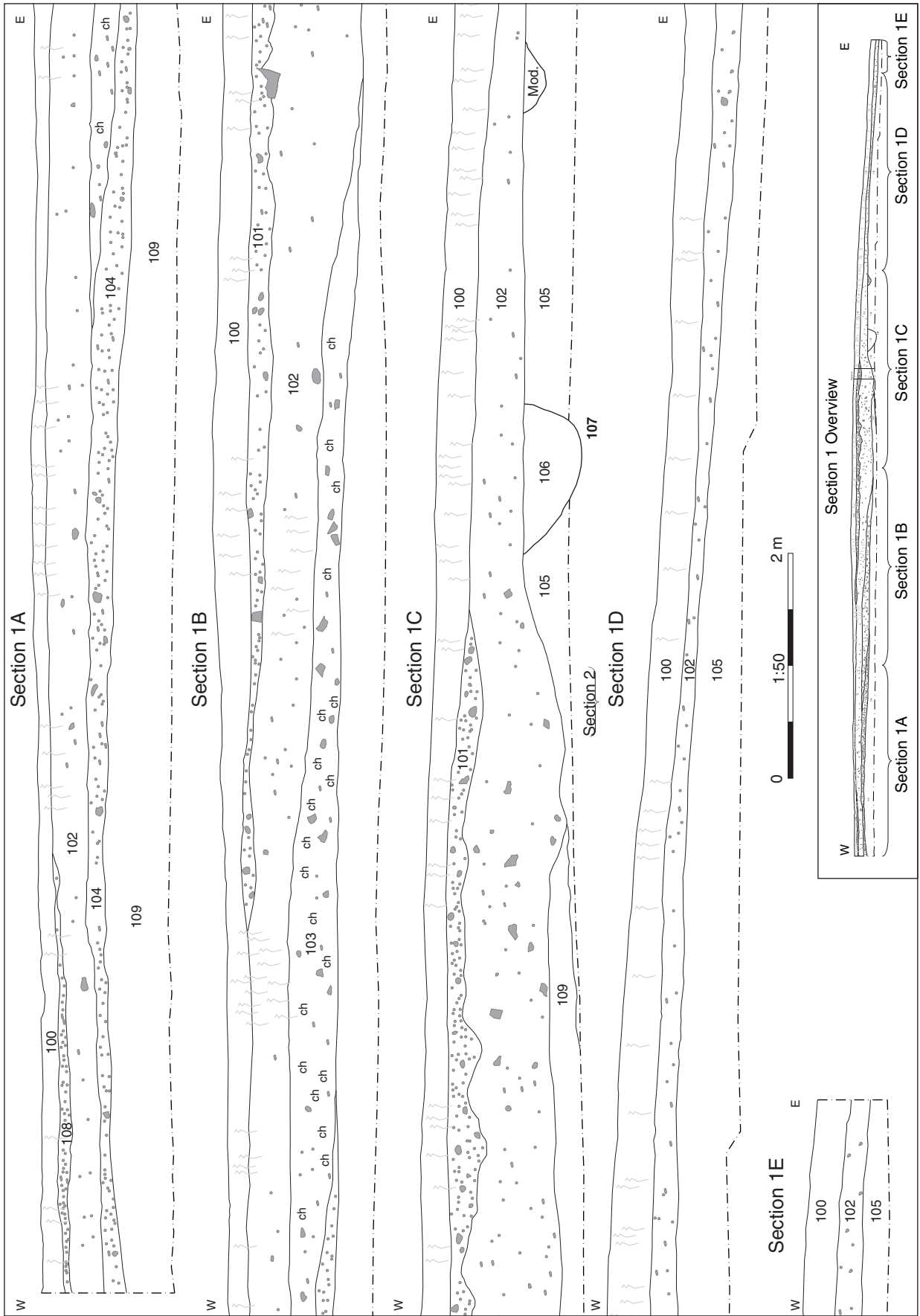


Figure 3: Section 1







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